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Feasibility and Effectiveness of Integrating Content and Language in English Teaching in Japan

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Abstract

In the last couple of years, an advanced model of language instruction integrating language and content (e.g., content and language integrated learning [CLIL]) has been increasingly popular in second language (L2) classrooms in Japan. However, the effectiveness and feasibility of the method have not been fully examined in terms of L2 development and school curriculum policies. Based on the paper presented in a graduate course "Content-Based L2 Learning" at McGill University, this paper will initially demonstrate the characteristics of content and language integrated programs (e.g., CLIL, CBLT). Then the current educational policies of Japanese government and immersion and bilingual programs at secondary school level and university level will be examined. Finally, by proposing instructional models to implement content and language effectively in L2 classrooms, benefits and concerns regarding the implementation of such kind of programs will be discussed.

1. Introduction

In the current globalized world, an instructional approach integrating content and language in educational settings, such as CBLT (content-based language teaching) and CLIL (content and language integrated learning), have been widely recognized as a revolutionary way of teaching languages across the world. In Japan, in the last ten years, the governmental policy for English teaching education has corresponded to the growing demand for cultivating globalized citizens, particularly the youth in Japan. Although a limited number of bilingual education programs, such as partial immersion programs, International Baccalaureate (IB) programs at secondary education, and CLIL programs at tertiary education, had already been implemented in Japan, these programs will draw a great deal of attention from educators, parents, and their children in the future. However, in spite of attracting many people, the extent to which the programs are feasible and effective in Japanese educational settings has not been fully tested, and instructional strategies regarding the integration of content and language have not been sufficiently developed. Therefore, in this paper, the key features of CBLT and CLIL, which originated in North America and Europe, will be illustrated by representing the benefits and challenges that emerged from empirical studies in CBLT and CLIL settings. In the main section, the background to and governmental policy regarding Japanese bilingual education will be represented. By outlining the studies regarding two immersion programs and CLIL programs at tertiary and secondary education, I will examine and evaluate the currently implemented programs in Japan. Two models to effectively implement CBLT and

CLIL programs in Japan will then be proposed. Finally, the benefits and remaining concerns for implementing such types of programs in the Japanese education system will be discussed.

2. Key features of instruction integrating content and language

Recently, there has been a focus on integrating English language teaching with subject-matter content in formal educational settings in Europe and other areas of the world (Mehisto, Marsh, & Frigols, 2008; Dalton-Puffer, 2007; Lyster & Ballinger, 2011). This integration has brought about two similar approaches, CBLT (CBI: Content-based instruction) and CLIL (Lyster & Ballinger, 2011). CBLT is an instructional approach in which nonlinguistic content, such as science, is taught to students through the medium of a language that the students learn as a second, indigenous, heritage, or foreign language (Tedick & Cammarata, 2012). Met (1998) described a feature of alternatives as a continuum extending from content-driven to language-driven approaches (see Figure 1). In the middle of the continuum are programs in which students learn one or two subjects in an L2, while concurrently taking a language art class (for example, English-medium CBLT in China).

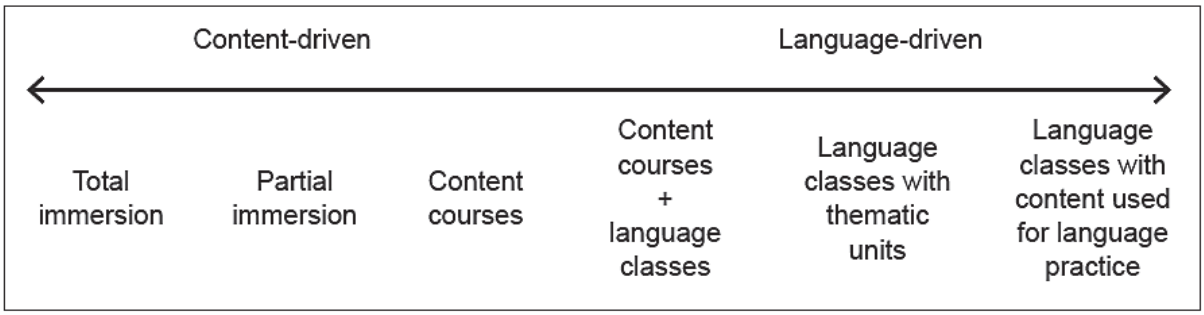

Figure 1 Range of CBLT settings, adopted from Met (1998) p. 41.

The origin of this approach to second language (L2) teaching is Canadian one-way (foreign language) immersion programs for a language majority (i.e., English speaking) students introduced in the mid-1960s, which then became widespread through the US and other parts of the world (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). In addition, in the USA, a large number of two-way immersion programs integrate a similar number of students from different L1 backgrounds, such as Spanish and English, and the instruction is provided via the two languages (Lyster & Ballinger, 2011). This approach is on the increase. Similarly, in the Basque Country, there are total immersion programs using the medium of Basque not only for native Spanish-speaking students, but also for native Basque speakers in order for them to maintain their first language (Lasagabaster, 2008). Furthermore, there are a number of immersion programs using languages like Gaelic, Catalan, Welsh, and Irish, throughout the world (Lyster & Ballinger, 2011).

CLIL emerged in the mid-1990s in Europe (Coyle, 2008; Mehisto et al., 2008) and has been widely recognized as a new type of L2 instructional method. Although CBLT and CLIL share philosophical and theoretical underpinnings and considered to be similar approaches in this

regard, CLIL has certain distinguishing features (Cammarata & Tedick, 2012). CLIL was adopted across the European Union when the landmark European Council 2005 recommended the implementation of CLIL into schools (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010). CLIL is defined by Coyle et al. (2010, p. 1) as "a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language." Although Ting (2010, p. 3) states "CLIL advocates a 50:50/content: Language CLIL-equilibrium", research conducted in CLIL classrooms have indicated the difficulty of achieving a strict balance of language and content. As Cenoz, Genesee, and Gorter (2014) claimed, such a flexible and inclusive definition makes the definition of CLIL too broad and less precise in conceptualization. According to the principles of CLIL, developing plurilingual competence can be facilitated through the 4Cs framework, in which "content", "communication", "cognition", and "culture" are holistically integrated in various models (Coyle et al., 2010). Moreover, there are core features of CLIL, such as lower and higher order thinking skills, scaffolding, and portfolio assessment (Coyle et al., 2010; Sasajima, 2013).

3. Benefits and challenges of implementing CBLT and CLIL in educational settings

3-1. Benefits

While in traditional L2 teaching methods language is treated in isolation as something to learn, an integrated approach attempts to bring language, academic and cognitive skills together through instruction. As Snow, Met, and Genesee (1989, p. 202) noted, content, such as subject matter, can provide "a primary motivational incentive for language learning insofar as it is interesting and of some value to the learner and therefore worth learning." The authors also identified two kinds of language objectives, namely "content-obligatory" and "content-compatible" language objectives (ibid., p. 205). While the first term refers to the language required to successfully master the content, such as CLIL's "language of learning" and "language for learning", the latter objective can be taught within the content, but is not necessarily required to use for the mastery of the content, defined as "language through learning" in CLIL (Coyle et al., 2010, pp. 35–38). As Met (1994, p. 162) notes, activities used in CBLT classrooms will "facilitate the acquisition of content-obligatory language and may provide students with a valuable advance organizer for lessons on the same topic taught in the main stream classroom." Integrating content with language instruction will also make it possible to provide experiences that are "context-embedded" and "cognitively demanding" (Cummins, 1992, p. 18). The use of concrete materials, hands-on activities, and visual aids will supply multiple methods for learners to fully understand content. Cummins (1992) also argues that context-embedded tasks can easily become cognitively undemanding tasks; in other words, simply counting numbers. Coyle et al. (2010, p. 29) also notes that content must be cognitively engaging for students, in other words, tasks need to be designed to facilitate learners' problem solving and high-order thinking processes. Therefore, by appropriately increasing the cognitive demand in context-embedded tasks in accordance with students' age and proficiency level, students' L2 and cognitive development will be maximized (Met, 1994).

Multiple large-scale studies in French immersion education have demonstrated that the students' academic achievement and L1 development was better, or as good as, that of non-immersion students, regardless of the students' backgrounds and proficiencies (Genesee, 1987; Genesee & Lindholm-Leary, 2013). In addition, it has been consistently reported that immersion students have a much higher level of L2 proficiency than that of non-immersion students studying L2 as a subject (Genesee, 1984; Lyster, 2007). Furthermore, various research findings have represented evidence of greater cognitive flexibility (Lazuruk, 2007, as cited in Cammarata & Tedick, 2012), and better nonverbal-problem-solving abilities among immersion students (Bamford & Mizokawa, 1991, as cited in Cammarata & Tedick, 2012).

3-2. Challenges and attempts

However, research conducted from the 1970s to the 1990s demonstrated that, although immersion students achieve native-like proficiency levels in receptive skills, their productive proficiency is not sufficiently developed in area such as grammatical accuracy (Harley, Cummins, Swain, & Allen, 1990), and sociolinguistic appropriateness (Mougeon, Nadasdi, & Rehner, 2010; Lyster, 2004). It was pointed out that a lack of systematic attention to language development in teaching subject matter resulted in the decreased attainment of language proficiency (Lyster, 2007; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Swain, 1988).

A number of challenges regarding the complexity of an appropriate balance between content and language have been presented to immersion teachers and researchers. Although immersion teachers perceive that they are always teaching L2 through content, they do not consistently and systematically balance content and language in instruction (Fortune, Tedick, & Walker 2008). In the context of Asia and Europe, it has been reported that teachers are struggling to integrate language with content-based programs. For example, in China, Kong and Hoare (2011) investigated CBLT lessons involving "cognitive content engagement" (CCE), and found that learners' cognitive engagement was consistent with appropriately challenging content adopted by teachers and with the teachers' scaffolding ability to assist learners in dealing with such content in depth by making use of effective pedagogical techniques, like cyclical lesson structures, and feedback.

Tan (2011) also revealed that curricula and time constraints to teachers working collaboratively were critical factors that limited opportunities to fully develop students' L2 competence. Further challenges, such as the lack of metalinguistic knowledge, understanding the functional aspect of language, and the lack of professional training programs, were also revealed in various studies (Cammarata, 2010; Walker & Tedick, 2000; Fortune et al., 2008).

In a similar vein, due to the lack of teacher training, teachers' classroom discourse, including question types, could also negatively affect learners' cognitive and academic language development. Yassin, Tek, Alimon, Baharom, and Ying's (2010) study in Maraysia and Dalton-Puffer's (2007) CLIL study revealed that teachers' question types, such as display questions, and utterances that lack systematic complexity must be consistent with the learners' proficiency level, their

opportunities for using the L2, and their cognitive development level.

In reaction to these findings, a number of attempts have been made to enhance the immersion students' language skills by encouraging them to produce the language and to modify the utterances containing linguistic errors (Swain, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 2008). In particular, Lyster (2007, p. 125) represented a pedagogic framework, called "counterbalanced instruction," which systematically integrates content-based and form-focused instruction, which will later be discussed in detail. Similarly, the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model provides a series of teaching strategies and lesson plans for teachers (Short, Echevarría, & Richards-Tutor, 2011). Chamot and O'malley (1987) developed the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), in an attempt to ease the transition from ESL classes to mainstream academic classes in which the subject matter is taught in English.

3-3. Interpretation of CLIL research

In spite of numerous examples of the positive effects of CLIL lessons on L2 proficiency and motivation, as several researchers (Tedick & Cammarata, 2012; Lázaro & García Mayo, 2012; Cenoz et al., 2014) have noted, many studies (Villarreal Olaizola & García Mayo, 2009; Martínez Adrián & Gutiérrez Mangado, 2009) have failed to describe program contents adequately, and lack the accurate and detailed measurements of L2 proficiency. The shortcomings of the research design and measurements make it difficult to interpret the findings appropriately. As Cenoz et al. (2014, p. 258) also posits, it is required that "there not be just more research, but rather more critical research on CLIL". As Tedick and Cammarata (2012) state, CLIL is obviously rooted in the CBLT tradition. In CBLT settings in North America, considerable effort has been made regarding ways of effectively integrating content and language (Lyster, 2007; Short et al., 2011). As Cenoz et al. (2014, p. 259) further stress, "theoretical, empirical, and pedagogical attention" should be carefully paid to various types of instruction when integrating content and language. In order to enhance the effectiveness of CLIL methodology, these findings from CBLT research should be taken into account.

4. Implementation of CBLT and CLIL in Japan

4-1. Bilingual education in Japan

English educators and researchers in Japan frequently discuss the growing need for bilingual education, influenced by the rapid globalization. Moreover, as many Japanese and international companies require applicants to have a high degree of proficiency in English, an increasing number of parents have expressed strong interest in sending their children to bilingual programs in public, international, or immersion schools (Yuliya, 2013). However, since there are no definite structures (rules) for implementing bilingual programs in Japan with regard to Japanese public schools, English immersion programs face some challenges. As English education in Japan is strongly influenced by the government's policy concerning globalization, the following section

describes recent government policy. Two immersion programs, one at Katoh Gakuen (2014) and the other at Gunma Kokusai Academy (2014), will then be described. I will also introduce and examine the effects and feasibility of the latest trend in English education, which is towards CLIL programs in secondary and tertiary education.

4–2. English education policy in Japan

The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), *Monkasyo*, proposed a five-year action plan called the Strategic Plan to Cultivate "Japanese with English Abilities" (MEXT, 2003, p. 1). In Japan, passing entrance exams for university or senior high school has been the greatest motivating force for learning English. This educational system was the deciding factor regarding who is allowed to attend which university (Hagerman, 2009), and it is said to cause washback, defined by Bailey (1999, p. 3) as "the impact tests have on teaching and learning." It has been pointed out that this negative washback is one of the reasons for students' failure to attain higher levels of communicative proficiency in English (Aspinall, 2006).

MEXT has recently decided to implement several new policies. In 2009, MEXT launched the "Global 30 Project", aimed at selecting 30 universities to take the initiative in the strategic process of internalization (MEXT, 2011). For the universities, adopting English as a medium of the instruction (EMI) was required for the funding purposes; thus many types of EMI programs have been emerged.

In addition, teaching English from the primary school level (all fifth- and sixth-graders, aged 10–12) was launched in 2011. Moreover, a new 2013 "course of study" (CoS) for senior high school English education was implemented in the national curriculum (Ikeda, Pinner, Mehisto, & Marsh, 2013). This policy indicates that all senior high school English classes should essentially be taught in English. The primary purpose of the policy is to shift the predominant focus on grammar drills and translation methods to a greater emphasis on communicative activities and the teaching of critical thinking skills (Tahira, 2012). In 2013, MEXT also announced that they have decided to introduce the International Baccalaureate (IB) program into the wider school system by offering a dual-language (Japanese and English) IB diploma, with the intention of implementing IB into 200 secondary schools in Japan by 2018 (Kosaka, 2014). These schools include the Doshisha International Academy Elementary School (2014), the Ritsumeikan Uji Junior and High School (2014), and a single public secondary school (The Mainichi, 2014), the Tokyo Metropolitan Kokusai High School (2014). Furthermore, in January 2014, MEXT has announced the "English Education Reform Plan corresponding to Globalization" (MEXT, 2014) in order to systematically structure the English education environment from primary to secondary education level during 2014-2018. As such, the governmental policy corresponding to the globalization has a significant impact on English education in Japan.

4-3. Immersion schools in Japan

Katoh Gakuen

Immersion education is defined as education in which 50% or more of the school curriculum is taught in the foreign language of the students (Genesee, 1984). Johnson and Swain (1997) categorized all immersion programs according to the following three types: early total immersion, (L1 dominant) partial immersion, and late immersion. The Katoh Gakuen (2014) is the first early English language partial immersion program through to grade 9, and is attached to a regular non-immersion program in Shizuoka. The immersion students spend at least half of their academic day studying via the medium of English. As this school was also authorized by both the Ministry of Education (MEXT) and the International Baccalaureate program (IBO), the immersion program had to follow the national curriculum closely, including translating the Japanese textbooks used in the regular curriculum (Bostwick, 2001). According to Bostwick (2001), students in the immersion programs are Japanese and almost all of them enter the program with little or no English speaking ability. Furthermore, students are not the elite, as most of them come from middle- or upper-middle class families, where exposure to English is very limited.

The first English immersion school has proven to be quite successful. Overall, the academic achievement and L1 proficiency did not lag behind the national average, while L2 proficiency progressed remarkably, at or beyond the junior high school level (Bostwick, 2001). However, due to the lack of substantial research results, serious concerns regarding the effectiveness of the programs in terms of passing entrance examinations for universities and fears regarding the loss of identity have been raised by parents and educators (Bostwick, 2001). In terms of cultural identity, Downes (2001) found that the immersion programs positively influenced the students' sense of Japanese cultural identity, in line with a greater appreciation of different cultures, although their sense of cultural identity decreased after grade 6. As Genesee (1984) argues, this change in attitude may occur due to the limited exposure to L2 use. It must be carefully examined whether the effect of immersion programs is maintained after grade 7.

Gunma Kokusai Academy (GKA)

At present, another partial immersion program has been implemented in Japan. Gunma Kokusai Academy (GKA), a private K-12 English immersion school established in 2005 in Gunma Prefecture, is a pilot project initiated by the former Prime Minister (Mondejar, Valdivia, Laurier, & Mboutsiadis, 2012). GKA is run by the Ota Municipal Government and models itself on the Katoh Gakuen (Gunma Kokusai Academy, 2014). The effects of the program are regarded as having been very successful. In the National Achievement Test conducted in Japanese, GKA students attained a mean of 80% in 2007, outperforming the national average by 17%. Moreover, the first year of junior high school (grade 7) recorded 477 on average in the TOEIC, outperforming Japanese university freshman majoring in English or in English literature

(Mondejar et al., 2012; Matsuzawa, 2009).

In spite of the higher achievement on the test scores, Yuliya's (2013) study illuminated challenges and problems in GKA. In the small project in GKA, Yuliya (2013) provided a series of extra communication activities after school to facilitate the students' communication skills and to overcome the grammatical difficulties. The 17-week course consisted of four 40-minute sessions per week and focused on facilitating the four skills through a variety of communicative tasks, such as discussions and oral presentations, as well as explicit grammatical instruction. The crucial element of the course is the teacher's scaffolding from feedback and comments about the students' homework. Furthermore, a student-centered approach was adopted in class. A principal of the immersion school and five teachers were interviewed, and 45 high school students (aged 16–18) participated in a questionnaire. The researcher also observed the regular classes of the five teachers.

Although the study is lacking in evaluating the effects of the extra course on the immersion students' L2 development, the detailed description regarding challenges in the program and the perceptions of teachers and students revealed the negative side to the GKA program. One of the challenges raised by GKA's principal and teachers is establishing an "English speaking policy" inside the school (Yuliya, 2013, p. 313). From observing the lessons in GKA, the researcher found that students spoke more Japanese than they did English, although the teachers conducted the lessons in English and the students comprehended the utterances. In addition, when the teachers asked the students a question, they hesitated to respond in English. The researcher found that, as the classes were conducted using a teacher-centered approach, the students lacked the opportunity to produce L2 in the classroom. The researcher also noted that this might contribute to the students' hesitation to use their imperfect English. According to the students' comments on the questionnaire, they cannot ask the teachers to clarify what they do not understand, because the students are nervous and they do not know how to ask a question in the L2. Thus, the students prefer classes in Japanese to those in English.

The second challenge is grammatical difficulties and the lack of opportunity for learning grammar in the regular curriculum. In GKA, grammar is taught once a week. The principal acknowledged that grammar is essential for promoting L2 learning, and that the students need more instruction in grammar. As Kamada (2000) also stated, immersion teachers tend to emphasize content over the grammatical aspects of learning English. This is particularly true of the higher grades (from grade 9 or 10), when the grammatical structure becomes more complex. In the observed classes, the teachers implicitly corrected grammatical errors (recast) and the students did not notice their errors, which "may further lead to wrong habits in student speech" (Yuliya, 2013, p. 318). This challenge clearly calls for integrating language-learning instruction into content learning lessons.

The last challenging issue is ways of maintaining students' motivation to study subjects in English. Students in English immersion programs in Japan lack opportunities to use English

outside their classrooms. In the questionnaires, most students stated that they are not certain why they learn English. They also responded that it was their parents' choice and they wished to please their parents. There were a few students who answered that learning English would be useful when working at international companies in the future. However, although they did not choose their schools themselves, they were happy to study at their schools as they had many friends there (Yuliya, 2013, pp. 316–317). As Yuliya (2013) stresses, children's personal determination regarding their language choice will result in a deeper understanding of the purpose of learning L2 and becoming aware of different cultures. As such, various factors affecting students' motivation to learn L2, such as parental choice of the language, and the relationship among peers must be carefully considered and examined by parents and teachers.

4–4. CLIL in Japan

Tertiary education

In recent years, CLIL has been widely recognized as a new and innovative English teaching approach in Japan. Several magazines, books, and newspapers are devoted to CLIL and a few programs have been partially implemented in schools from primary to tertiary levels (Kane et al., 2014). In addition, a number of CLIL workshops for teachers were held, initiated by the Sophia University (Ikeda et al., 2013). The first CLIL program was initiated by Dr. Sasajima and his two colleges at Saitama Medical University (Sasajima, 2013). Sasajima and his colleges have rigorously designed a CLIL curriculum and materials, and have implemented this in the university course. They have also collaborated on teacher education, specifically focusing on teachers' reflection on CLIL programs (Kane, Tanaka, & Kobayashi, 2014).

By collaboratively playing the leading role in the implementation of CLIL at tertiary levels, Sophia University has offered the first tertiary level CLIL course, the "Academic English Program" in Japan. The "Academic English Program" consists of two courses, "Academic English I" and "Academic English II". The first course, offered for freshman in the spring semester, focuses on developing English proficiency and academic skills, such as taking notes, to prepare for the Academic English Program II, in which students understand the specialized content (for example, anthropology, natural science, and human happiness) in the L2 and acquire creative thinking skills (Watanabe, Ikeda, & Izumi, 2011; Izumi, Ikeda, & Watanabe, 2012). Sophia also runs an MA program in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), in which a course on CLIL is offered.

Secondary education

Although there are many teachers and researchers currently attempting to promote and implement CLIL programs in other educational levels, few empirical studies and practices have been conducted in Japan (Ikeda et al., 2013). Ikeda (2013) conducted an empirical study at a public upper-secondary school in Saitama, where the CLIL approach was implemented in a

cross-cultural study class in April 2011. The participants, 80 students aged 16–17 in the foreign language section, were randomly divided into four groups (classes). Each group took the class twice a week (50 minutes and 90 minutes, respectively) for a year (35 weeks; 62.5 hours for two of the groups and 72.5 hours for the other two). The content the participants studied was "global issues" (global warming, racism and human rights), taught by the researcher, two experienced Japanese teachers and assistant language teachers (ALTs). Adopting the CLIL methodology, students were engaged in task-based cooperative learning, such as talking in pairs, discussions, writing reports, and oral presentation. In addition to the CLIL class, the students were required to take three general English lessons (focusing on reading and listening) and another three lessons in enhancing production skills, including paragraph writing, presentation skills and debating. Each class lasted 50 minutes. A course evaluation questionnaire was completed by the students at the end of the academic year, and pre- and post-course essay writing tests were conducted and marked by an automated scoring program.

The results indicated that students' overall writing proficiency developed, particularly in terms of fluency (number of words) and complexity (variation of word use). However, accuracy (number of errors) did not improve. According to the questionnaire, the students perceived CLIL lessons as having distinct advantages compared to the regular class, particularly in terms of cognitive activities, constructive learning, increased content knowledge, and improved communicative competence. However, they evaluated the effects of the CLIL method on developing their L2 four skills as being relatively moderate (Ikeda, 2013). As Ikeda (2013) also acknowledged, there are several shortcomings in the study. Firstly, as there is no comparison group, the validity of the CLIL method in the four groups was not accurately assessed. The researcher also noted writing proficiency is not necessarily attributable to the CLIL method, since the students also participated in six regular English lessons. It is not clear how the teachers helped and used scaffolding with the students in the class, although the teachers were trained in CLIL methodology. Furthermore, as the researcher stated, the teachers attempted to correct their errors in order to improve their accuracy in writing. Ikeda (2013, p. 40) relates this as, "following CLIL principles, they now accepted an SLA theory that making mistakes is part of language learning; they wanted the students to notice their errors and correct them by mistakes." Even if the teachers had intended to make the students self-repair, the teachers must have helped the students to confirm the answers. Finally, as the questionnaire is based on students' perceptions, it is not determined whether the students' cognitive development was facilitated by the CLIL lessons or not.

4–5. Models for integrating content and language in Japan

As previously discussed, the findings from English immersion and CLIL studies in Japan clearly call for a more systematic and elaborate integration of language-focused instruction in content-based teaching. It seems that, in all cases, learners are certainly engaged in enriched content by being exposed to meaningful input or by developing fluency through discussions

without focusing on enhancing accuracy. In the CLIL study at the secondary school, how can EFL learners facilitate L2 proficiency and cognitive development without paying attention to accuracy development? As Lyster (2007, p. 75) notes, developing fluency by ignoring accuracy, or focusing on a specific repertory of language, will not necessarily extend and restructure the learners' interlanguage system. Returning to the findings from CBLT research (Swain, 1988; Lyster, 2007; Lightbown, 2014), an increased intentional and systematic focus on language instruction in meaningful content learning, rather than incidental approach (Long, 1991), will adequately manipulate and complement content teaching and will ultimately optimize L2 development. In order to mitigate the problems revealed in the previous programs in Japan, the following section will introduce two models, the "counterbalanced instruction" model proposed by Lyster (2007), and the four-skill integrated CLIL lesson model in the business English program designed by MacKenzie (2012).

Model 1: Counterbalanced instruction model

Considering the current situation in the previous studies, Lyster's (2007, p. 125) "counterbalanced instruction" will be one of the most prominent models for integrating form-focused instruction with content-based instruction in Japanese subject/L2 classrooms. Based on the wide variety of findings from French immersion and two-way immersion research in the USA, he presents a rich repertoire of instructional strategies to effectively develop L2 acquisition in CBLT. For example, in the systematic sequence of pro-active form-focused instruction strategies, he proposes "noticing" activities (input enhancement) and "awareness" activities (rule-discovery and L1-L2 comparison activities) before engaging in production-based, controlled, and communicative tasks. Based on Skehan's (1998) dual-coding system, Lyster (2007) posits that controlled practice and communicative practice play different roles in developing L2 proficiency, as the former facilitate learners' awareness of rule-based representation in interlanguage systems, and the latter practice enhances the quick access to lexicalized exemplar-based represenations, thus, facilitating spontaneous production. During the form-focused instruction, teachers are encouraged to employ explicit grammar instruction, including rule explanation (DeKeyser, 1995; Norris & Ortega, 2001), when students are developmentally ready. In addition, teachers are encouraged to negotiate form in interacting with learners, through providing helpful corrective feedback (recast and prompt) and assisting students to solve their linguistic problems. These strategies proposed by Lyster (2007) will effectively work in the manner suggested by Gibbons and Cummins (2002), Cummins (1998) and Gatbonton and Segalowitz's (2005, p. 329) "ACCESS model", ensuring that lessons flow from the meaning-focused stage (the whole and familiar part) to the form-focused stage (the part and unfamiliar part), and back to activities that develop fluency through the repeated use of the L2. This "counterbalanced instruction" will effectively balance the learners' attention by focusing on the link between language and content in any educational setting. Teachers can ensure balance by shifting the

learners' focus, either onto more language in meaning-oriented classrooms, as seen in immersion and CLIL programs in Japan, or onto content (subject matter) in the traditional grammar-oriented class, as is often seen in Japanese secondary schools.

Model 2: The four-skill integrated CLIL lesson in the Business English course

In a similar vein, MacKenzie's (2012) CLIL lesson for the Business English course at Toyo University (Tokyo, Japan) would be an excellent model. The academic English course is offered for the 1st year students majoring in business and management. The course consists of two sessions, "Reading and Writing" (IB-21 class) and "Speaking and Listening" (IIA-21 class). In addition to using the English-only textbook series *Quest Intro* (Hartmann & Blass, 2007a; Hartmann & Blass, 2007b), she makes extensive use of authentic and complementary materials, such as excerpts from videos, and authentic texts from books, newspapers, and magazines. The topics in both textbooks cover education, business and study abroad, with some useful form-focused writing activities. These topics are relevant to the students' needs, because they are majoring in business and many of them intend to study abroad. Topic, such as education, may have played a role in mitigating the content complexity, since learning business matters in L2 was too demanding for the freshman.

In the Reading and Writing course, students were required to engage in pair and group work; in other words, to undertake a small research project based on reading texts, and writing a report and an academic essay. By using the "Process Approach to Writing" (White & Arndt, 1991), students collaboratively read their drafts, provided peer feedback, and revised and produced the final work (an essay of seven to eight paragraphs). Table 1 shows the overview of the work in the Listening and Speaking course (IIA-21) during the semester. Students in this

Table 1

Basic outline for the II-21 Course: 30 lessons (MacKenzie, 2012, p. 147)

Theme 1 Education: Topic: Personality and Learning (spans 5~6 lessons) Topic: Learning and Memory (spans 4~5 lessons)
Theme 2 Business: Topic: Career Choices (spans 5~6 lessons) Topic: Marketing for the Ages (spans 4~5 lessons)
Research Report: Individual one-page typed report. Give clear details of what you will discuss during the final presentation. (Due: Mid-semester)
Collaborative in-class dictogloss activities with a focus on form: Business English Vocabulary - 60 items (spans 6~7 lessons)
Final Group Research Project / Presentation: Research a university affiliated with Toyo's Student Exchange and Study Abroad Program. Prepare an 8 - 10 group minute presentation.

course progress through a series of activities in the textbook and engage in pairs and in-group discussions to share their ideas. In the middle of the term, they were asked to submit a report of their individual research. They also present the group projects in the final class, and a series of dictogloss tasks (Wajnryb, 1990) are used to develop students' awareness of grammar and business English vocabulary.

The distinctive features of both courses are as follows:

(1) Four language skills are effectively integrated in the various types of cognitively challenging activities (individual or pair/group collaborative tasks) in enriched meaningful context (context-embedded instruction),
(2) Abundant opportunities for scaffolding their process of production (spoken and written) among peers and by the teacher are provided,
(3) Language-focused activities (grammar-focused writing tasks and dictogloss) are integrated in the series of the activities.

Throughout the session, the teacher purposefully creates ample opportunities for the learners to learn the L2 and to raise their metalinguistic awareness during the communicative tasks. In other words, the teacher carefully remedies the problems with the learners' language in the process of learning the L2, either by scaffolding or by monitoring the peer feedback.

MacKenzie (2012) also paid attention to the students' motivation (cognitive engagement) in terms of the content complexity and the difficulty for the learners. Consistent with Kong and Hoare's (2011) cognitive content engagement, the framework in Cummins (1992), and GKA's findings (Yuliya, 2013), students' L2 development and motivation depend on the appropriate level of content complexity (context-embedded and cognitive demanding degree) and the teacher's scaffolding skill. MacKenzie (2012) draws on Csikszentmihalyi's (1996; 2004) "flow" theory (see Figure 2), and explains that maximum learning takes place when learners feel completely engaged in the activities at hand; thus the sense of time passing will be accelerated when an optimal state of intrinsic motivation attained. If the tasks are either too easy or too

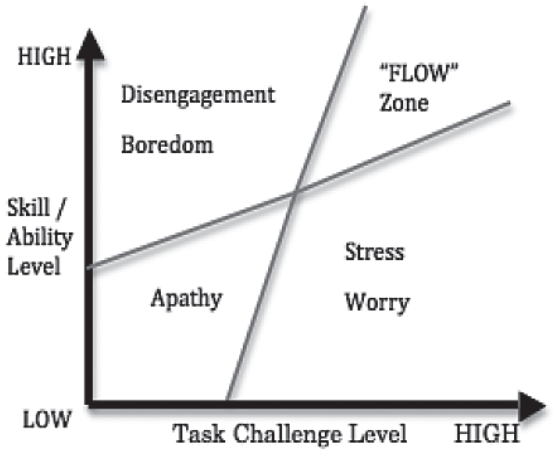

Figure 2 Flow Theory. Adopted from Csikszentmihalyi (1996).

difficult, the "flow" cannot occur. She further states, "We want to avoid boredom and anxiety in the classroom and do our best to create opportunities for the "flow" where the passage of time is forgotten" (ibid., p. 147).

As seen in the previous immersion study in Gunma Kokusai Academy (Yuliya, 2013) and in the CLIL study at Sophia (Watanabe et al., 2011; Izumi et al., 2012), a number of comments in the questionnaires reveal that students are concerned about the level of the course due to lack of L2 proficiency. In the case of MacKenzie (2012, p. 145), a questionnaire regarding the level of difficulty of course textbooks showed that 69% students answered that the level is "just right", and 22% of them answered that it was "a little hard." The mismatched level of the content will demotivate students, and will impair their L2 performance and development. MacKenzie (2012, p. 147) further states, "the teacher's responsibility lies in finding a proper balance of task challenge and cognitive skills development to move students forward." Thus, teachers must carefully balance the content level and the language-focused tasks in the teaching content.

The idea of integrating four skills (reading and writing, listening and speaking) in communicative activities will bridge the gap between content-driven and language-driven learning. It seems challenging for low proficiency learners to focus exclusively on subject matter without improving their four skills via sufficient and step-by-step support from their teachers. MEXT also clearly stated that the purpose of foreign language education at secondary-school level is to foster communicative ability, and stressed the importance of balancing the teaching of the four skills, as can be seen from the overall objective, "to develop students' basic communication abilities, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing" (MEXT, 2008, p. 1). In addition, MEXT regards grammar instruction as "a means to support communication" (MEXT, 2009, p. 7). In other words, grammar instruction should not be separate from such activities that foster the four skills. In the language art class in EFL contexts, like Japan, developing the four skills in conjunction with appropriate grammar instruction and the teachers' scaffolding techniques would be one of the ideal solutions. In this sense, the framework in Lyster (2007) and the lesson outline in MacKenzie (2012) are applicable to regular L2 lessons in Japan as well.

4-6. Benefits and concerns for implementing CBLT and CLIL in Japan

Lastly, taking the findings of previous studies and the discussion, I will explain the benefits of adopting integrated instruction, and the concerns to be considered for the successful implementation thereof in Japan. As seen in MEXT's strenuous effort to implement EMI programs (immersion, IB, tertiary programs offered in English), integrating content with language-focused instruction at all education levels has been a revolutionary approach in Japan. Although the important role of grammar instruction must not be overlooked, we are also required to increase opportunities for being exposed to ample, enriching content to counterbalance the content and language, as well as to optimize the effect of grammar instruction. Given that learners use the L2 through natural and meaningful interaction in content-embedded tasks, and

are continuously engaged in the negotiation of meaning, they will be able to learn more about language than they would when the purpose of the lesson is only to acquire the language skills (Navés, 2009; Met, 1994). Learners will acquire not only the concrete knowledge of the subject (content), but will also enhance their language proficiency and cognitive skills when they engage in the carefully designed lessons. The elaborate linguistic scaffolding provided by teachers and peers will enable students to focus on content and to further develop their L2 competence. In this sense, the framework and instructional strategies in Lyster's (2007) "counterbalanced instruction" will play a prominent role in circumventing the problem of overemphasizing content or language at the expense of either language or content.

In order to successfully implement CBLT/CLIL programs in Japan, we need to carefully consider the following concerns. Firstly, as I proposed previously, we will be required to develop a systematic framework to integrate language-focused instructional strategies into content-based teaching classrooms. Similarly to GKA's case, as Stryker and Leaver (1997, p. 299) reported, the college level adult L2 learners explicitly "wanted and needed" to deal with grammar in CBLT programs. As previously seen in Malaysia's case (Tan, 2011), the lack of a systematic professional development program led to the failure to implement science teaching in English. As seen in Kong (2008; 2009) and Tan's (2011) studies, Butler (2005, p. 235) also stresses as follows,

> … teachers also must pay close attention to how systematically and consistently students can be exposed to language functions and forms through various topics and content. Since the systematic and repeated use of language will facilitate learners' language acquisition, the curriculum need[s] to be organized in "spiral" forms so that students are exposed to the same linguistic components systematically and repeatedly. This requires close collaboration between curriculum developers, language teachers, and content teachers.

Therefore, it is also important for policy makers or researchers taking the initiative to implement CBLT/CLI to provide teachers with systematic support in order to assist them to develop strategies for the effective integration of content and language. As Butler (2005, p. 238) further notes, policy makers must launch the new programs by "securing sufficient funding support, school-wide and parental support", and providing "sufficient time for negotiation and preparation of curriculum and teaching materials." Finally, exclusive research testing the effectiveness of CBLT/CLIL programs should be conducted in classrooms at various educational settings. In the Japanese educational system, the teachers' and students' primary goal tends to be the acquisition of a greater degree content knowledge, as quickly and effectively as possible in order to pass entrance examinations. Some students may easily assume that most content will be effectively acquired in their L1 rather than in their L2. In other words, such students often cannot find a reason to learn subjects in English, and some of them will be frustrated by their lack of proficiency in understanding instruction and materials in the L2 (Butler, 2005). It will therefore be required to present the positive effects of using the CBLT/CLIL approach, and

teachers and school principals will need to explain to parents how they support their students.

5. Conclusion

This paper demonstrated the key features of CBLT and CLIL in the North American and European contexts, revealing the benefits and challenges seen in the empirical studies. In spite of the well-documented benefits of CBLT contexts, one of the most challenging issues among teachers and researchers is ways of consistently and systematically integrating language instruction with subject matter instruction. As reported in a number of empirical researches (Kong & Hoare, 2011; Tan, 2011), teachers' strategies to scaffold students' process of learning content knowledge and L2 acquisition play a critical role in facilitating the students' L2 proficiency and cognitive development. Unfortunately, continuous and systematic support for teachers has not been sufficient in various contexts, such as Malaysia's unsuccessful implementation of science teaching in English.

Japan has recently launched the implementation of immersion and CLIL-like programs in secondary and tertiary education. Strongly influenced by the ongoing English education policies corresponding to globalization, Japan is paying a great deal of attention to bilingual education. As seen in several immersion and CLIL programs currently implemented in Japan, the systematic integration of language-focused instruction with subject matter instruction has not been fully accomplished. Integrating enriched content into traditional L2 instruction (an exclusively grammar-focused approach) will be one of the predominant and revolutionary ideas for reforming English education in Japan. As seen in French immersion studies, the effective integration of content-based and form-focused instruction will result in great benefits not only in terms of L2 acquisition, but also with regard to cognitive development.

However, it must be noted that, in exclusively content-driven instruction, language learning will be incidental and learners' errors may never be corrected. Even though teachers and researchers perceive that they integrate language and content, previous studies reveal that learners are concerned about their low proficiency in the L2 and actually need more systematic, language-focused instruction. I do not disagree with the key principles of CLIL, such as the 4Cs, but a more elaborate and systematic framework of language-focused instruction should be presented and carried out during lessons. It is also crucial to pay more attention to the appropriate level of cognitive demand of tasks, or to adjust the content level to the learners' proficiency levels, cognitive development stages at different ages, and to the students' needs and interests. Moreover, increased classroom-based research with a rigid framework and assessment, and a detailed description of the instruction, will be called for. The two models previously proposed in this paper will be useful in restructuring the systematic instructional strategies in Japan. Although CLIL programs have been recently regarded as an innovative method in Japan, CLIL advocators need to develop a more elaborate framework to integrate content and language by discussing the findings and instructional strategies presented in CBLT

studies. For developing the instructional framework, such as the "counterbalanced instruction" model, we need to carefully consider how the quality of regular English classes in secondary schools can be enhanced in order to access the immersion (EMI) programs in tertiary education. Therefore, the idea of a four-skills integrated lesson, such as in the CLIL for business course, will be a model to prepare for learning subject matter via the medium of English.

In order to effectively implement immersion, IB, or CLIL programs in educational settings in Japan, it will be imperative for our government to provide teachers with "securing sufficient funding support, school-wide and parental support", and "sufficient time for negotiation and preparation of curriculum and teaching materials" (Butler, 2005, p. 238). The current policy for implementing early English education at primary schools lacks sufficient support, resulting in confusion for primary school teachers. When the systematic strategies of language-focused instruction are developed and implemented with ample support from the government, the outcomes of instruction that integrates content and language would be fruitful.

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